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discourage and suppress it all in their power.

I have heard it suggested, that government should increase the fines on the parishes where the stills are found, and make it felony to be found working at the business; this is a measure I hope the good sense and spirit of the people will render unnecessary, as our statute book already groans with pains and penalties, and I should be exceedingly sorry to find that my countrymen were so dead to their own interests as to have them increased on this occasion. D.

Belfast, May 12, 1809.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

ON THE WILD IRISH GIRL, AND IDA OF
ATHENS.

THE insertion of a paper addressed to you, which appeared in the last number of the Magazine, induces me to trouble you with some remarks on two of Miss Owenson's novels. I am enthusiastically attached to the Irish character, and to my country, but that attachment does not lead me entirely to overlook the defects of the Irish. I am anxious that our authors should rather study the useful, than the ornamental and showy in their writings. High sounding words, and finely rounded periods may catch the attention of the frivolous, but seldom mislead the judgment of the sensible and well informed. Female writers are frequently met with, and the inferiority of intellect is not now so confidently asserted as formerly. I believe it is entirely our own fault if we are the inferior sex; but our attention being so often turned to trifling and unimportant pursuits, makes us greater triflers than we ought. Much of our character through life depends on our education in early life; even so late as fifty years ago, females got very little education; but a great improvement has now taken place, and I earnestly and warmly entreat my countrywomen to go on improving, and not to consider that after leaving school our education is finished, but that we may improve every day.

My earnest wishes for the character of my countrywomen, induces me to offer some remarks on the "Wild Irish Girl," which I am confident is not a

true delineation of the Irish character, for I have a better opinion of our countrywomen than to suppose their whole attention is occupied in the manner Glorvina's too generally was. The scene in the boudoir is unworthy of a female pen, and I cannot think highly of the refinement of a mind which was capable of imagining such a scene. In my former paper I mentioned Miss Owenson's heroines being so much attached to coquetry, and as a sample I shall refer to the 2d volume of the *Wild Irish Girl*, pages 236, 239, and 240, where something of the refinement of coquetry is discovered. Many other passages equally objectionable, are met with in this book. As I am

"Still pleased to praise, yet not afraid to blame:"

I must say there are some excellent descriptions in the *Wild Irish Girl*. I began to read it with the highest expectations, and was delighted with the half of the first volume, which is excellent. I felt real interest in the story of Murtoch O'Shaughnassey. Miss Owenson seems to have caught some distinguishing traits in the character of the Irish peasantry. Father John is excellent, and she deserves much credit for drawing the character of a benevolent Irish Priest. The description of the castle of Inismore, the Prince, Glorvina, and the old nurse, would be highly interesting to those who are not acquainted with Ireland, or Irish manners, but the tale loses a great deal of its interest when we know that no such castles are now in existence. The furniture of the castle is rather incongruous. If Miss Owenson's motive for writing this book were to reconcile English prejudices, or the prejudices of some of the inhabitants of Ireland, against their Catholic neighbours her motive was laudable and praise-worthy; but why in sketching the character of an Irishwoman need she have made Glorvina a flirt and a coquet? Such I hope is not the distinguishing trait in the character of an Irishwoman. Miss Edgeworth's tales have a simplicity that Miss Owenson's writings do not possess. Miss Edgeworth's *Moral and Popular Tales* may be read with advantage by persons of all ages. Her sentiments are so excellent, and moral, that she must always be considered an honour to her sex,

To show that indiscriminate censure is not my aim, as well as to inculcate a useful and much needed lesson, I shall conclude this little sketch of the Wild Irish girl, by a few lines of the excellent advice of the Earl of M—— to his son at the conclusion of the 3d volume, when he exhorts him as to his conduct to his Irish tenantry and dependents, the sentiments cannot be too often repeated.

“Remember that you are not placed by despotism, over a band of slaves, creatures of the soil, and as such to be considered; but by Providence over a certain portion of men, who, in common with the rest of their nation, are the descendants of a brave, a free, and an enlightened people. Be more anxious to remove the *causes*, than to punish *effects*, for trust me, that is only to

“Scotch the snake—not kill it;”

to confine error, and awaken vengeance. Be cautious how you condemn, be more cautious how you deride, but be ever watchful to moderate that ardent impetuosity which flows from the natural tone of the national character, which is the inseparable accompaniment of quick and acute feelings, which is the invariable concomitant of constitutional sensibility; and remember that the same ardour of disposition, the same vehemence of soul, which inflames their errors beyond the line of moderate failing, nurtures their better qualities beyond the growth of moderate excellence.”

Miss Owenson deserves the highest praise for the patriotism, which is perceivable in all her writings; it is her delineation of the female character to which I object.

Ida is written even in a more affected manner than the Wild Irish Girl, but it has been so well reviewed in the Magazine, that I shall only mention as a sample of Ida's coquetry; when Osmyn was standing under the window she heard him, and not wishing to let him know she perceived him, and yet to discover to him that she was in the chamber, she placed the tripod in the middle of the floor, and walked between the lamp and the window, so that her shadow might be seen on the ground where Osmyn was.”

Is not this *studied finesse*? Miss Owenson's admirers may say I am severe, I trust I am not unjustly so. All have an undoubted right to think for themselves, and I always wish to have an independent judgment.

A LOVER OF SIMPLICITY OF CHARACTER.

For the *Belfast Magazine*.

ON SELF-POSSESSION.

“He who ruleth his own spirit, is better than he who taketh a city.”

SOLOMON.

IT is lamentable to consider, that many eminent commanders, who have conquered large provinces and countries, have not been able to conquer themselves. Alexander the Great, is an awful instance of this, who, after all his conquests, wept, because his ambition could be no longer gratified. The greatest philosophers have appeared destitute likewise of self-government at the approach of death, though in the course of their lives they evinced great heroism. Whereas it is the nature of self-possession to rise superior to every discouragement in life and death. Examples have occurred, of those who have acted from this principle, more especially in the early ages of the church; who, under the most excruciating torments, have betrayed no marks of impatience, whilst they sealed the truth with their lives. Even before the knowledge of Christianity, eminent men arose, who in general appeared to have the mastery over their own passions. Job was an instance of this virtue, who, amidst the complicated loss of children and property, exclaimed, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.” Another pious character said, “I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, for it was thy doing.”

Some, no doubt, have naturally more command of themselves; their tempers have been cast in a better mould, so that they pass through life almost unruffled. Whatever events happen, they treat them as a matter of indifference, whereas others not only feel the smallest trifles, but show a spirit of resentment; like the sensitive plant, they feel the least touch, and shrink from the cause of their misery. This may be attributed to the weakness of